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Great Lakes Partnerships

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Great Lakes PARTNERSHIPS



CANADA-ONTARIO AGREEMENT

RESPECTING THE GREAT LAKES

BASIN ECOSYSTEM 1994

One Team ONE GOAL

THE GREAT LAKES ARE ONE OF THE
WORLD'S MOST PRECIOUS NATURAL
RESOURCES. THE GREAT LAKES BASIN IS HOME
TO SOME 40 MILLION CANADIANS AND AMERI-
CANS AND IS ONE OF NORTH AMERICA'S MOST
IMPORTANT REGIONS OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY.
IN SIGNING THE 1994 CANADA-ONTARIO
AGREEMENT (COA), CANADA AND ONTARIO
SHARE RESPONSIBILITY TO RESTORE, PROTECT
AND SUSTAIN THE WORLD'S LARGEST FRESH-
WATER ECOSYSTEM, THE GREAT LAKES BASIN.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

ECOSYSTEM APPROACH: Canada and Ontario agree to consider all elements of the ecosystem, which means wildlife, plants, people, land, air and water; and will strive to maintain the delicate balance.

POLLUTION PREVENTION AND CONSERVATION: Protecting the Great Lakes Ecosystem from further harm means preventing pollution at the source.

PARTNERSHIPS ARE KEY: Governments cannot do it alone. COA outlines ways for everyone to work together: governments, municipalities, industry, First Nations and individuals.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY: A key commitment in the new COA is to give regular progress reports to the public and interest groups.

CLEAR OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

As part of this new agreement, Canada and Ontario set targets and agree to deliver clear and measurable results (See chart on back). Working together, the governments will:

CONTINUE TO RESTORE DEGRADED AREAS, in particular the Areas of Concern (AOC) identified by the International Joint Commission (IJC).

PREVENT AND CONTROL POLLUTION with an emphasis on the virtual elimination of persistent toxic substances of greatest concern, and the significant reduction of other pollutants.

CONSERVE AND PROTECT HUMAN AND ECOSYSTEM HEALTH, including wildlife, people, land, air and water.



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CANADA AND ONTARIO WORKING TOGETHER

The new COA is a cooperative effort of seven federal departments and four provincial ministries:

CANADA

Agriculture and
Agri-food
Canadian Heritage
Environment Canada
Fisheries and Oceans
Health Canada
Public Works and
Government Services
Canada
Transport Canada

ONTARIO

Ministry of Agriculture,
Food and Rural Affairs
Ministry of Environment
& Energy
Ministry of Health
Ministry of Natural
Resources

SETTING THE STAGE FOR BINATIONAL COOPERATION

Canada and Ontario have built a strong Canadian domestic program to achieve the goals called for under the Canada-U.S. Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.

Both governments recognize that a cooperative partnership with the U.S. is vital to the long-term health of the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem.

COA provides the basis for Canada and Ontario to work closely with U.S. federal and state agencies.

MEETING CANADA'S OBLIGATIONS

COA enables Canada to respond to its commitments under the Canada-U.S. Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement as well as to recommendations for action from the IJC. COA calls for:

- Emphasis on completing the job of Areas of Concern (AOC) clean-up
- Action on persistent toxic substances with a goal of virtual elimination
- Commitments to prepare Lakewide Management Plans
- Confirmation of the Lake Superior Zero Discharge Demonstration Initiative
- Public reporting on progress towards clear and measurable targets
- Support for binational action

PARTNERSHIPS

Canada and Ontario have set tough targets for the next six years of action on the Great Lakes. Partnerships with key players in the Basin are essential to success.

Under COA, both governments will seek the involvement of the private sector, industry associations, universities and other research centres, environmental groups, First Nations and community-based organizations.

Canada and Ontario acknowledge the special role of, and the cost to, municipal and regional governments in cleaning up historical pollution as well as putting in place conservation practices to prevent future degradation.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Everyone who lives, works and plays in the area has a stake in a healthy Great Lakes Ecosystem and a role to play in its restoration, protection and conservation. Canada and Ontario, through the COA acknowledge a number of mechanisms for involving the Basin residents in the challenge, including the following:

- Public Advisory Committees in the 17 Areas of Concern (AOC)
- Public involvement activities on Lakewide Management Plans
- Public Forum on the Lake Superior Initiative
- Public consultations on health issues
- Community health workshops on exposure assessment.

EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT

A joint federal-provincial Management Review Committee will work with partners, stakeholders and interest groups to set strategies and priorities, and to review and evaluate progress.

Clear and measurable results with milestones and performance indicators are central to the new Great Lakes management approach under COA.

Finally, COA calls for regular reports to the public as progress is made.

FOR MORE INFORMATION and a copy of the full Canada-Ontario Agreement respecting the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem 1994 contact:

ENVIRONMENT CANADA
Communications Branch
(416) 973-6467 or
1-800-668-6767 toll free

ONTARIO MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY
Public Information Centre
(416) 323-4321 or
1-800-565-4923 toll free

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OBJECTIVES

KEY RESULTS

RESTORE DEGRADED AREAS

AREAS OF CONCERN (AOCs)

- Restore 60% of impaired beneficial uses.
- Delist at least nine of 17 AOCs.
- Upgrade eight primary sewage treatment plants to secondary treatment.
- Undertake 25 stormwater control and management demonstration projects.
- Reduce discharges of untreated municipal wastewater from combined sewers by 40%.

REHABILITATION

- Rehabilitate native biological communities in the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem, including 12 AOCs.
- Develop and implement recovery plans for six threatened species, across the Basin.
- Rehabilitate and protect 6000 ha of wetland habitat and 600 km of shoreline habitats, across the Basin, including AOCs.

CONTAMINATED SITES/SEDIMENTS

- Remediate: 10 priority federal sites, five orphan sites and 20 provincial sites.
- Cleanup severely contaminated sediments, particularly at priority sites in AOCs.

HUMAN HEALTH

- Reduce risk of environmental contaminant exposure in six known high-risk human populations.

PREVENT AND CONTROL POLLUTION

VIRTUAL ELIMINATION OF PERSISTENT, BIOACCUMULATIVE AND TOXIC SUBSTANCES

- By 1996, achieve zero discharge for aldrin/dieldrin, chlordane, DDT, mirex and toxaphene.
- Decommission 90% of the high-level PCBs, destroy 50% of the high-level PCB waste now in storage, and accelerate the destruction of stored low-level PCB waste.
- Achieve a 90% reduction in the use, generation or release of benzo(a)pyrene, hexachlorobenzene, alkyl-lead, mercury, octachlorostyrene, dioxins and furans.
- Reduce the use, release or generation of 26 other toxic substances and establish specific timelines and targets for achieving their virtual elimination.
- By 1996, develop a Canada-U.S. strategy to eliminate discharge of persistent bioaccumulative and toxic substances.

CONVENTIONAL POLLUTANTS

- Improve federal and provincial spill prevention, preparedness and response programs in priority areas.
- Identify atmospheric loadings of toxic chemical and their impacts, derived from world-wide sources, to support international negotiations.

CONSERVE AND PROTECT HUMAN AND ECOSYSTEM HEALTH

LAKEWIDE MANAGEMENT PLANS

- Develop ecosystem-based principles, objectives and indicators for Lakes Ontario (1995), Superior (1996), Erie (1996) and Huron (2000).
- Develop Stage I and II Lakewide Management Plans (LaMPs) for critical pollutants for Lakes Superior (1996), Ontario (1997) and Erie (2000).

CONSERVATION

- By 1994, implement the Great Lake Wetlands Conservation Action Plan.
- By 1999, secure a network of protected areas in the Great Lakes Basin.
- By 1997, develop and implement joint action plans to control the introduction of and mitigate impacts of nuisance species, such as zebra mussels and ruffe.

HUMAN HEALTH

- Achieve for the general population a 30% reduction in human health risks associated with exposure to environmental contaminants.

ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

- Identify impacts of climate variability and change on the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem and develop adaptive responses.
- Implement water efficiency initiatives to reduce per capita water use.
- Support development and implementation of Environmental Farm Plans.



